



Volume VIII

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## Fee for Parking on Bridge Street: An Experiment in Revenue Production

From July 1 until Labor Day, non-residents will have to pay to park along Bridge Street. The selectmen voted for this charge late in 2008 in order to produce a revenue source that they hope will offset the expensive safety measures proposed for Lighthouse Beach. The fees are identical to those of other town beaches (\$15 per day) but will not be charged to Chatham residents if they have any type of town sticker on their cars.

Nine signs will be posted along the presently permitted parking areas on both sides of Bridge Street, from the Mitchell River Bridge toward Main Street. The present no-parking sections will remain. Non-resident beachgoers can purchase parking passes at the kiosks at Ridgevale, Cockle Cove and Hardings Beach, or at the permit office (at 283 George Ryder Rd. at least through July 4), Monday through Friday, 8-4pm. Permits will also be available at the Harbormaster's Office, Stage Harbor Road, seven days a week. Cars without a parking permit or a town sticker will be ticketed. The fine is \$50.

### Parking in the Old Village May be Affected

Old Village residents have expressed some concern that the new parking fees will result in more traffic and illegal parking on Old Village streets. Police Chief Pawlina has given his assurance that if home owners call to report violations in front of their homes, an officer will attend to the matter as soon as possible. The chief said that the department is planning to give extra attention to the Old Village area over the summer months. He asked that homeowners be patient if an officer does not come immediately. Due to budget cuts, his staff is stretched thinner than in previous summers, and emergency calls will always receive precedence. Owners are urged to call the police, rather than take any private measures on their own.

Most people who are involved in this highly experimental revenue producing program feel that, at least for the first summer, there will be some serious public confusion about the rules. The Old Village Association will keep an eye out. Chief Pawlina has asked the Association to report back to him in late July about possible enforcement problems. To help us with that effort, the Board of Directors would like to hear from property owners. Please call Carol Pacun (945-1627) with any complaints – or compliments.

Meanwhile, keep calm.

## Lighthouse Beach: An Experiment in Safety

After several contentious meetings, the Board of Health and the Parks and Recreation Commission have come up with a safety program for Lighthouse Beach. The beach will be open this summer for swimming in the area below the parking lot. However, at the "point," the section of the beach 2200 feet south of the stairway, no one will be allowed in the water at any time due to dangerous cross currents. Signs will designate the no swimming area.

Two lifeguards will be on duty at the beach every day, 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. from Friday, June 26 to Labor Day and for two additional weekends in September. No floatation devices such as rafts, rubber tubes or scuba gear will be permitted. A Chatham Harbormaster Department boat with one person onboard will be stationed off the beach, unless it is involved in another safety operation. One lifeguard will be designated as a beachmaster, with full authority to prohibit swimming along the entire beach if conditions are not favorable. On those occasions, he will put up a red flag.

Throughout the summer, the Parks and Recreation Commission will give biweekly reports to the Board of Health on the safety program. After June 15, the Board of Health will meet Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall. The public is welcome to attend.



## AN EDITORIAL BLOWOUT (IT'S BEEN A LONG WINTER)

### CHATHAM'S GOVERNMENT (PART 1): On the Funny Side

"It would be nice if something would make sense for a change." *Alice in Wonderland*

This editor has written two editorials a year for the past eleven years. That's a lot of cajoling, observing, complaining, and on a rare occasion, even praising. In all those hundreds of words, I tried to express opinions about the preservation of our neighborhood and beyond. This has been serious – some might say tedious and redundant – stuff. (see editorial, part 2, below.)

Last year, with my head exploding from years of issues, I decided to try to look on the funny side. The result was a short mystery/satire called *Our Crazies*. The hapless characters in the book suffer through many of the trials and tribulations all small town preservationists experience when they seriously challenge the powers-that-be in an atmosphere where common sense is in short supply. Now that the book is finished, I find myself looking over the past years of politics in Chatham with a new eye. Clearly, truth is weirder than fiction. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the bizarre quality of our local government. People who keep up with town affairs stop me to tell me yet another absolutely true "Our Crazies" moment.

Let's consider the events of this winter when the selectmen decided to require paid parking on Bridge Street for the Lighthouse Beach. This discussion *preceded* the Board of Health arguments that the beach might not be safe for swimming and was *concurrent* with ongoing complaints of Bridge Street neighbors about the traffic flow and poor visibility for drivers when cars are parked on both sides of the street. The Traffic Study Committee ... well, let's say its studies continue to be "on-going." The final Bridge Street pay-to-park plan (approved, of course – what isn't approved?) was structured in such a way that non-residents would have to buy daily parking stickers at another location, even as far away as Hardings Beach. Admittedly, the most inappropriate of those locations, the Police Department, has now been replaced by the Harbormaster's Office. All involved regard this paid parking plan as an "interesting experiment."

On to the always amusing Planning Board, which outdid itself at a recent hearing on Dunkin' Donuts by banning any comments from the overflow audience during or after the discussion. The board justified this ban because the applicant said he would not come if people were allowed to talk. The Chairman of the Board of Selectmen and others were threatened with police presence if they did not

shut up. The Planning Board also spent the whole winter discussing new zoning bylaws for affordable housing, a long-running process in which five assumed mature men tried to understand language and concepts given to them at the last minute by the Department of Community Development in multi-colored drafts which they had little time to read. No wonder they didn't want public comment. It was an out of body experience to listen as they tried to justify – for example – placing needy families with children in the industrial zone, surrounded by heavy machinery and wood chippers. (All proposed affordable housing bylaws were defeated at town meeting, an encouraging indication that not everyone is off their rocker.) Then, of course, the board finished its season by informing us that Dunkin' Donuts is not, I repeat, not, a fast food restaurant. I wonder if we'll be able to get reservations for dinner on Saturday night?

You can't make this stuff up.

*Note: Channel 18 televises live, with frequent reruns, Planning Board and Board of Selectmen meetings. They also can be accessed on your computer (Town of Chatham web site, archive- videos).*



### CHATHAM'S GOVERNMENT (PART 2): Dead Serious

*Elected and appointed officers, officials and employees of the Town of Chatham are expected to demonstrate, in their general conduct and in the performance of their duties and responsibilities, the highest ethical standards.*  
– Chatham Town Charter

#### The "Hole" Truth in Dunkin' Donuts

The Dunkin' Donuts/ Sou'wester brouhaha is already old hat. As Bill Belichick is apt to say, "it is what it is." However, one issue presented at the selectmen's very contentious meeting remains a matter of some concern. Two people had the courage to question the appropriateness of the process in terms of what they saw as a widespread "perception" among Chatham residents that ethical standards are not being followed in town government. They wondered about the apparent close relationship between a developer and the building inspector, whose job it is to regulate the developer's activities. If this concern involved a Wall Street regulator and the head of Bank of America, we would be demanding a full investigation. But Chatham is a small town where everyone seems to know or possibly be related to everyone else. As a result, most of us have not been bothered by

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## “Hole” Truth – continued from page 3

who’s seeing whom or for what reason. However, small town or not, all town officials and employees whose job it is to serve the public must be held to a high standard of behavior and be held accountable for their actions.

Like the speakers, I sense in Chatham a growing concern about the town’s ethical base. Rumors abound, true or false, and accusations fly about largely because of the blatant lack of transparency in town government, innumerable conflict of interest issues, which are largely ignored by some boards and commissions (including the Board of Selectmen), and the one-sided appointment process, which results in marginalizing those who ask uncomfortable questions and do not blindly accept what they are told. Although I was almost relieved that ethical concerns were finally brought out into the open at the selectmen’s meeting, the comments themselves do not bode well for Chatham. Issues of impropriety can fester beneath the surface, but citizens are not willing to avert their eyes forever. Chatham’s government will not be able to operate successfully if public trust keeps eroding. Who will vote for a bylaw – or anything else – if he or she feels it is the product of self interest, rather than in the best interests of Chatham? These people were correct in expressing concerns about Chatham’s ethical health and the perceptions voters have about their government. In public, for all to hear. The selectmen and the town manager would be foolish to ignore their warning.

*Carol Pacun, editor*

*Note: These editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the Old Village Association Board of Directors.*

### Help!

Your Editor is asking (begging) for members’ contributions to the newsletter. Please consider writing an editorial, a remembrance of times past, or an article on any subject that might be of interest to Association members. I’d love to devote one page to readers. Just think of it as a step away from blogging .... The next newsletter will be in November. I promise to remind you of this request!

*Carol*



*In Memoriam  
Barbara Holekamp  
Anne Place  
Warren “Sam” Simmons*

## New Footbridge Over Mill Creek

After 21 years of faithful service, the 1988 footbridge was removed by a crane in 21 minutes. The replacement bridge was started by that same crane driving four piles (2400-pounds-each) into the bed “to refusal.” The portion of a pile you can’t see reaches about 13 feet below the bed. The balance of the new structure grew from that firm foundation.

Some safety elements have been included in the new design. There are horizontal bars between the uprights to guard against children falling off the deck into the creek. There are steps at each end to force the many bikers who enjoy the beach path to dismount and walk their bike over the footbridge.

Numerous environmentally-friendly elements have been incorporated in the replacement. The major pilings for the center section are Greenheart lumber from South America. Greenheart, a “waterborne” wood, was requested by our Conservation Commission to avoid leaching of preservatives into the environment. Supporting that desire, the balance of the lumber is ACQ (alkaline quaternary copper) treated. ACQ does not leach the undesirable preservatives used in “pressure treated” lumber commonly available. The spacing between treads on the bridge is set to minimize shading of the vegetation below which will allow sunshine to sneak through to encourage eelgrass to grow and enhance our wildlife habitat around the creek. The steps have treads but no risers to reduce capture of flotsam. Likewise, cross members are above extreme high water to avoid capture of flotsam (the deck is a little higher than the Town Pier, in case our oceans rise).

Ninety-four households from our wonderful neighborhood have contributed to the replacement footbridge. Although it has been a long process from conception to design to permitting (Town, County and State levels) to construction, I hope the bridge will benefit our Old Village for a long time in the future. Please walk on it with pride.

*George Olmsted*

Many thanks to George for all his work on the bridge project. We will indeed walk on it with pride – and gratitude, especially to him and Mary as well as to the generous neighbors who contributed to the footbridge fund. –ed.



Completed Footbridge



POST OFFICE BOX 188  
CHATHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02633  
www.oldvillagechatham.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP  
SCHEDULED FOR JULY 30**

**Help Keep Old Village History Alive**

An oral history workshop will be held on Thursday, July 30 for those interested in conducting oral histories with Old Village neighbors. This is an important ongoing project which the Association began in 2004. More volunteers are needed in order to continue to build up a complete and varied history of the Old Village from the unique point of view of the people who have lived or summered here for a number of years.

Twenty-five people have been interviewed over the past couple of years and their recollections are now safely on tape, CD and hard copy in the Chatham Historical Society archives. Folks like Dan Buckley, Elizabeth Law Watkins, Ross Gould, Alice Weidman and Joseph Nickerson all have shared their wonderful memories of the Old Village. Call Nancy Koerner at 508-945-1912 if you want to attend the workshop and become an "official" interviewer. Nancy emphasizes that, even if volunteers can only do one or two interviews a year, their contributions will be invaluable.

**Save These Dates!**

*Program details to be sent in July*

**July 22, at 4:00 p.m.**

**ICED TEA AND COOL CONVERSATION**

**August 30 at 6:30 p.m.**

**ANNUAL MEETING**

At the Annual Meeting, directors and officers will be elected. The nominating committee consists of: Debbie Aikman, Ken Miller, Winnie Portenoy, and John Whelan.

Nancy Koerner will be an ex-officio member.